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Method of voting in the ensuing Municipal elections—cont.

* 2299 *Q.*—Sri P. K. GOPALAKRISHNAN : Will the Hon. the Minister for Local Administration be pleased to state—

(*a*) the method of voting to be adopted in the next elections to the Municipal Councils in the State; and

(*b*) the electoral roll which will be used for the purpose?

The Hon. Sri S. S. RAMASAMY PADAYACHI :—" (*a*) The attention of hon. Member is invited to the answer to clause (*b*) of starred question No. 2297.

" (*b*) That part of the electoral roll for the Madras Legislative Assembly Constituency which pertains to the municipality will be used for the purpose of elections to municipal councils."

Sri M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" Sir, the Government themselves have stated that this sort of voting has led to invalidation of a large number of votes. May I know what particular charm makes the Government stick to this system and experiment it further? "

The Hon. Sri S. S. RAMASAMY PADAYACHI :—" There will be more literate voters voting in the Municipal Elections and it is hoped that there will be lesser invalidation of votes."

Sri P. K. GOPALAKRISHNAN :—" Sir, my question has not been answered. My question (No. 2299) asks what electoral roll will be used in the next elections to the Municipal Councils? That portion of my question has not been answered."

DEPUTY SPEAKER :—" If the hon. Member wants, I will ask the Hon. Minister to answer the question again."

The Hon. Sri S. S. RAMASAMY PADAYACHI :—" I have already answered that that part of the electoral roll for the Madras Legislative Assembly Constituency which pertains to the municipality will be used for the purpose of elections to municipal councils. The above, Sir, is the answer for all the questions put."

Sri K. VINAYAKAM :—" Our Government seem to be experimenting too much in the present electoral system, as regards how the votes are to be cast. In the last District Board Elections, the names of candidates standing for election as well as the symbols allotted to them were printed in the ballot paper. In the ensuing Corporation elections, I believe, that only symbols allotted to the candidates will be printed in the ballot papers and that the names of candidates will be omitted. May I know whether the Government are not experimenting too much like this in the voting system? May I also know whether the Government will restore the old system wherein the name as well as the symbol allotted to the candidate will be printed during the coming elections to the Corporation of Madras? "

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THE HON. SRI S. S. RAMASAMY PADAYACHI :—" After the Municipal Elections are over, the whole thing will be reviewed."

SRI K. KUNHI MOHAMED SHAFEE :—" Was it due to any serious defects in the old method of voting that the Government have adopted this new method of voting? "

THE HON. SRI S. S. RAMASAMY PADAYACHI :—" No serious defects were found in the last elections in the method of voting."

SRI P. K. GOPALAKRISHNAN :—" In view of the fact that the Government persist in pushing through the system of marking on ballot papers, will the Government revise their rules for counting of ballot papers so as the representatives of the candidates, that is their agents, will be allowed to scrutinise the ballot papers to see whether the marking on the ballot paper is correct or not? "

THE HON. SRI S. S. RAMASAMY PADAYACHI :—" Even now, it has been permitted."

SRI P. K. GOPALAKRISHNAN :—" On a point of order, Sir. The rules with regard to the present counting of votes are such that the agents of the candidates are only allowed to scrutinise the invalid ballot papers and not all the ballot papers. It is, therefore, not correct to say that even now agents are allowed to examine all ballot papers."

DEPUTY SPEAKER :—" I want to know from the hon. Member how it is a point of order? A point of order can only be answered by the Chair and not by the Hon. Minister. Therefore a question cannot be put to the Hon. Minister as a point of order? "

SRI P. K. GOPALAKRISHNAN :—" I am only asking the Chair whether the Hon. Minister is in order to give a wrong answer? "

DEPUTY SPEAKER :—" I cannot say that it is a wrong answer or that it is a right answer."

SRI V. BALAKRISHNAN :—" In view of the fact that municipal areas cover a great percentage of literate voters, will it not be possible to defer judgment on these matters until the elections to municipal councils are over? "

THE HON. SRI S. S. RAMASAMY PADAYACHI :—" The whole thing will be considered after the municipal elections are over."

SRI M. NARAYANA KURUP :—" The Hon. Minister said that no serious defects were noticed in the previous system. May I know whether it is the question of economy that induced the Government to abandon a good system in favour of a bad system? "

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The Hon. Sri C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" I may inform the hon Member on the other hand that it is costing a little more than the old system. The hon. Member himself is aware of the abuses in the old system and that is why we want to evolve another system which will steer clear of those abuses. If the hon. Member feels that we should confine ourselves to only one system alone, it will not be possible to make changes in any system at any time."

Sri S. PAKKIRISAMI PILLAI :—" I would like to know, Sir, what exactly are the arrangements made for illiterate and women voters who do not know how to handle a pencil and mark a point to exercise their franchise? "

The Hon. Sri C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" It is not expected that they should write anything. They are only required to tick or draw a line or to make any mark. Some training to these illiterate men and women at least to handle a pencil some time or another is necessary."

Sri K. P. GOPALAN :—" May I know whether it is the intention of the Government to see that the party in power should be successful in this election and that is why the Government are denying the right to voting by illiterate voters by not following the system adopted in the last General Elections? "

The Hon. Sri C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" Sir, it is a very poor compliment to the Opposition Parties to say that they have the support of only illiterate people. The party support is broad based and I do not think any party gains any advantage by this system."

Sri S. RAMALINGAM :—" சமீப காலத்தில் மூடப்பட்ட முதியோர் கல்விப்பள்ளிக் கூடங்களையெல்லாம் மறுபடியும் திறந்து மக்களுக்கு வோட்டளிக்கும் முறையைக் கற்பிக்க ஏற்பாடு செய்வார்களா ? "

The Hon. Sri C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" கல்வி கற்றுக் கொடுப்பதற்கும், இதற்கும் சம்பந்தம் இல்லை. இவை யாருக்கு வோட்டுப் போடுவது என்பதைப்பற்றி தெரிந்துகொள்ளவேண்டிய விஷயம்."

Sri K. VINAYAKAM :—" Granting that we have got to experiment in fresh methods to educate the voters and to rectify the defects in the old system, I would like to know whether it is right for the Government to alter the voting system now and then without coming to a final decision on the matter and whether it is also proper that they should change the system often? For instance, in the last elections, names of the candidates as well as the symbols were printed on the ballot paper. Now, in the ensuing Corporation Elections, the names of the candidates are going to be omitted and that only symbols are going to be printed on the ballot papers. I wish to know whether the Government have got any right to go on experimenting like this which will result in confusing the illiterate voters? "

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THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" I am informed that the names of the candidates were not printed even in the case of elections to District Boards. (Several voices—No, no. It was printed.) After all, Sir, whether we should include the names of candidates also along with symbols is a matter of detail and that change is not being made in the same area. Last time, there were no elections at all in the municipal areas and therefore there is no question of any change being effected in the same area now and then. Again, Sir, I would like to use the same argument put forward by some Members that changes should not be made frequently and say we want to continue the method which we have adopted during the District Board elections to Municipal elections also and then take a final decision on the matter."

SRI S. SWAYAMPRAKASAM :—" Sir, it has been admitted that in our country illiterate persons form a large number of our population and that they do not know how to handle a pencil and mark a symbol even. That being the case, I wish to know whether any arrangements have been made to teach them how to cast their votes, apart from the propaganda carried on by the candidates standing for elections? "

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" It is a good suggestion, Sir, that propaganda should be carried on and that some sort of training should be given. I am sure the political parties will take note of this suggestion and do the necessary propaganda."

Death of a boy at a private school of physical culture in the City

9 a.m. * 2300 *Q.*—SRI N. K. PALANISAMY: Will the Hon. the Minister for Finance and Education be pleased to state—

(*a*) whether the School of Physical Culture run at No. 25, Ritherdon Road, Vepery, Madras, by an Anglo-Indian has the requisite permission of the Government;

(*b*) whether there was death of a poor boy who came for exercise there recently, due to the negligence of its owners; and

(*c*) whether the Government have ordered any enquiry over the death referred to above?

THE HON. SRI C. SUBRAMANIAM :—" (*a*) No, Sir.

" (*b*) Yes, Sir. On 18th October 1954, a student named Sri V. G. Ramamurthy while performing the exercise lost his balance and fell down. He was admitted in the General Hospital for treatment of injuries sustained. But he died on the same day while in the hospital. It is not known whether the death was due to negligence or not. However a case has been registered.

" (*c*) No, Sir."